

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently amended) ~~The method of claim 1~~ A method for communicating on a network between a first data processing system and a second data processing system, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

transmitting data packets on the network from the first data processing system to the second data processing system using a virtual private network (VPN); and
automatically reconfiguring the VPN to use alternate addresses on the network for the first data processing system and the second data processing system, wherein automatically reconfiguring the VPN to use alternate addresses on the network for the first data processing system and the second data processing system includes:

determining which of a plurality of reconfiguring algorithms is currently active; and
assigning an alternate address to the first data processing system and the second data processing system based on which of the plurality of reconfiguring algorithms is currently active.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Currently amended) ~~The method of claim 1, further comprising:~~ A method for communicating on a network between a first data processing system and a second data processing system, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

transmitting data packets on the network from the first data processing system to the second data processing system using a virtual private network (VPN);
activating one of a plurality of reconfiguring algorithms based on information from one or more avoider algorithm modules indicating when to switch between VPN tunnels; and
automatically reconfiguring the VPN to use alternate addresses on the network for the first data processing system and the second data processing system to thereby switch to an alternate VPN tunnel.

24. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein the information from one or more avoider algorithm modules indicating when to switch between VPN tunnels includes information indicating that VPN tunnels should be switched based on a maximum number of data packets that may be sent over a currently active VPN tunnel.

25. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein the information from one or more avoider algorithm modules indicating when to switch between VPN tunnels includes information indicating a specified time period a current VPN tunnel may be active.

26. (Currently amended) ~~The distributed data processing system of claim 10~~ A distributed data processing system for communicating on a network, the distributed data processing system comprising:

transmitting means for transmitting data packets on the network from a first data processing system to a second data processing system using a virtual private network (VPN); and

reconfiguring means for automatically reconfiguring the VPN to use alternate addresses on the network for the first data processing system and the second data processing system,

wherein the reconfiguring means includes:

means for determining which of a plurality of reconfiguring algorithms is currently active; and

means for assigning an alternate address to the first data processing system and the second data processing system based on which of the plurality of reconfiguring algorithms is currently active.

27. (Canceled)

28. (Currently amended) ~~The distributed data processing system of claim 10, further comprising:~~ A distributed data processing system for communicating on a network, the distributed data processing system comprising:

transmitting means for transmitting data packets on the network from a first data processing system to a second data processing system using a virtual private network (VPN);

means for activating one of a plurality of reconfiguring algorithms based on information from one or more avoider algorithm modules indicating when to switch between VPN tunnels;
and

reconfiguring means for automatically reconfiguring the VPN to use alternate addresses on the network for the first data processing system and the second data processing system to thereby switch to an alternate VPN tunnel.

29. (Original) The distributed data processing system of claim 28, wherein the information from one or more avoider algorithm modules indicating when to switch between VPN tunnels includes information indicating that VPN tunnels should be switched based on a maximum number of data packets that may be sent over a currently active VPN tunnel.
30. (Original) The distributed data processing system of claim 28, wherein the information from one or more avoider algorithm modules indicating when to switch between VPN tunnels includes information indicating a specified time period a current VPN tunnel may be active.
31. (Canceled)
32. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the one or more avoider algorithm modules determines when to switch between VPN tunnels based on an amount of data traffic transmitted over a current VPN tunnel.
33. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the one or more avoider algorithm modules determine whether a current total amount of data traffic transmitted over a current VPN tunnel during a life of the current VPN tunnel is equal to or greater than a threshold amount of data traffic, and if the current total amount of data traffic transmitted over the current VPN tunnel is equal to or greater than the threshold, then the current VPN tunnel is deactivated and the alternate VPN tunnel is activated.
34. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the threshold amount of data traffic is calculated as a sum of a portion of an IP address of the first data processing system and a portion of an IP address of the second data processing system, multiplied by a constant.
35. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the specified time period that the current VPN tunnel may be active is determined based on a time at which the current VPN tunnel was activated.
36. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the specified time period that the current VPN tunnel may be active is determined randomly.

37. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the specified time period that the current VPN tunnel may be active is determined as a function of a sum of a number of minutes past an hour at which the current VPN tunnel was activated plus a constant.

38. (New) The method of claim 21, further comprising:
automatically selecting, during a same session between the first data processing system and the second data processing system, an alternate VPN tunnel for transmitting data packets from the first data processing system to the second data processing system, wherein the alternate address assigned to the first data processing system and the alternate address assigned to the second data processing system are associated with the alternate VPN tunnel.

39. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the reconfiguring algorithms automatically select, during a same session between the first data processing system and the second data processing system, the alternate VPN tunnel for transmitting data packets from the first data processing system to the second data processing system, wherein the alternate address assigned to the first data processing system and the alternate address assigned to the second data processing system are associated with the alternate VPN tunnel.

40. (New) The data processing system of claim 26, wherein the reconfiguring algorithms automatically select, during a same session between the first data processing system and the second data processing system, an alternate VPN tunnel for transmitting data packets from the first data processing system to the second data processing system, wherein the alternate address assigned to the first data processing system and the alternate address assigned to the second data processing system are associated with the alternate VPN tunnel.

41. (New) The data processing system of claim 28, wherein the reconfiguring algorithms automatically select, during a same session between the first data processing system and the second data processing system, the alternate VPN tunnel for transmitting data packets from the first data processing system to the second data processing system, wherein the alternate address assigned to the first data processing system and the alternate address assigned to the second data processing system are associated with the alternate VPN tunnel.